

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 H-01 HA-05 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00  
/036 W

-----063634 191936Z /44

O R 191816Z JAN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6704  
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SHUM, OCIP (DRINAN, FATHER ROBERT), PDIP, ES  
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT OF EL SALVADOR REITERATE  
PROTEST OVER COMPORTMENT OF CONGRESSMAN DRINAN

REF: SAN SALVADOR 0222 AND 0239

1. AT PRESIDENT ROMERO'S REQUEST, I WENT TO HIS OFFICE  
AT 11 AM ON JANUARY 18. THE PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT  
ASTACIO BOTH RECEIVED ME.

2. PRESIDENT ROMERO SAID THAT HE FELT COMPELLED TO  
PROTEST THE COMPORTMENT OF CONGRESSMAN DRINAN ON HIS  
RECENT VISIT TO EL SALVADOR. IN TALKING WITH HIM, THE  
CONGRESSMAN HAD RAISED HIS VOICE, HAD LEVELLED MANY  
ACCUSATIONS, AND HAD THREATENED TO CUT OFF FUTURE AID  
AND CREDITS TO EL SALVADOR. FROM THAT MEETING, HE HAD  
GONE ON TO DO THE SAME WITH THE VICE PRESIDENT. AND  
LATER HE HAD BEHAVED VERY RUDLY WITH CABINET MINISTERS  
WHO RECEIVED HIM. AS AN EXAMPLE, THE PRESIDENT CITED  
THE MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE IN WHICH  
FATHER DRINAN ALLEGEDLY CHALLENGED THE MINISTER  
TO "PROVE" HE WAS A REAL MINISTER BY PICKING UP THE  
PHONE THEN AND THERE AND CALLING THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE  
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(FOR INFORMATION ON NUMBERS OF PRISONERS HELD BY SECURITY  
FORCES). THE PRESIDENT SAID INDIGNANTLY THAT MINISTERS OF HIS  
GOVERNMENT DO NOT HAVE TO "PROVE" THEMSELVES TO ANYONE.

3. PRESIDENT ROMERO SAID HE HAD RECEIVED FATHER DRINAN  
AT THE REQUEST OF THE AMERICAN EMBASSY. HE KNOWS, HE  
SAID, THAT THE EMBASSY IS WORKING TO ESTABLISH AND

MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. BUT FATHER DRINAN'S VISIT AND BEHAVIOR, HE SAID, HAD DONE NOTHING TO FURTHER THAT CAUSE. IT WAS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE FOR ANYONE, ESPECIALLY A FOREIGNER, TO TALK TO THE PRESIDENT OF A NATION IN THE WAY THAT FATHER DRINAN HAD. AS A PERSON, AS A SALVADORAN, AND AS A PRESIDENT, HE FELT COMPELLED TO REGISTER HIS STRONG PROTEST.

4. THE PRESIDENT SAID REPEATEDLY THAT HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR MY PRESENCE, WHICH HE RESPECTED, HE WOULD HAVE ASKED FATHER DRINAN TO LEAVE HIS OFFICE.

5. THE PRESIDENT ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THE ROLE OF MR. MCAWARD WHO HAD ACCOMPANIED FATHER DRINAN AND ARRANGED MUCH OF HIS PROGRAM. HE SAID THAT MCAWARD APPARENTLY HAS A CAR REGISTERED IN HIS NAME HERE IN EL SALVADOR (LICENSE PLATE 85-105) NOTWITHSTANDING HIS APPARENT STATUS AS A VISITOR. THE PRESIDENT ALSO CITED STATEMENTS ALLEGEDLY MADE TO LABOR LEADERS ASSEMBLED AT THE ARCHBISHOPRIC ASSURING THEM OF AMPLE FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND INVITING THEM TO BRING ANY PROBLEMS THEY MIGHT HAVE TO THE LABOR ATTACHE OF THE AMERICAN EMBASSY. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE, SAID PRESIDENT ROMERO, MR. MCAWARD DID NOT EVEN HAVE THE COURTESY TO SAY GOODBYE.

6. VICE PRESIDENT ASTACIO IDENTIFIED HIMSELF WITH THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS. HE SAID THAT CONGRESSMAN DRINAN'S BEHAVIOR CONTRASTED SHARPLY WITH THE ALMOST SIMULTANEOUS ONE OF CONGRESSMAN LONG: THE LATTER SEEMED TO BE SEEKING INFORMATION WHILE THE FORMER SEEMS BENT ON PURPOSEFUL PROVOCATION. (THE VICE PRESIDENT ALSO TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICE HE HAD NOT SLEPT AT ALL THE NIGHT AFTER THE MEETING WITH DRINAN AND WAS SO "SHOOK UP" THAT DURING THE MEETING HE HAD FORGOTTEN ALL OF HIS NORMALLY FLUENT ENGLISH.)

7. IN RESPONSE TO THIS COMBINED PRESENTATION, I SAID THAT I OBVIOUSLY COULD NOT SPEAK FOR FATHER DRINAN, THAT I PERSONALLY REGRETTED SO NEGATIVE AN OUTCOME OF ANY MEETING ARRANGED BY THE EMBASSY , AND THAT I WOULD REPORT THE WORDS OF THE PRESIDENT AND THE VICE PRESIDENT WITHOUT DELAY TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE.

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENT, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
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**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1978SANSAA00280  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
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**TAGS:** SHUM, OREP, PDIP, ES, US, (DRINAN, ROBERT)  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014